

Chapter 25

Value Assessment in E-Government

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ABSTRACT

Governments around the world have implemented or are in the midst of implementing, amid differing levels of progress, electronic government (e-Government). These implementations create different values for the different stakeholders. This chapter examines an e-Government Component Assessment Cube Framework for value assessment of e-Government information technology project implementations. The three main groups are (value) components, stages, and stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid global adoption of information technology (IT) has been fuelled by the lowered cost of hardware (i.e. storage and processor) and the availability of communicative infrastructures (i.e. Internet, mobile technology). IT has changed and are still changing the way people interact and communicate with others from around the world and the way corporations perform business internally and externally with their customers, for instance, in e-business and e-commerce.

In a similar way, governments have been challenged by demands from the public and businesses to employ such technologies to improve service delivery, provide faster response time and productivity. This gives rise to e-government, which changes the traditional way government serves its citizens and the public. After the implementation of e-government, the next step of interest will be to find out the values created for both the government and the people it serves.

Hence this chapter seeks to study and propose a value assessment framework for e-government implementations, which can access a value at a particular stage of implementation and for a particular stakeholder.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61350-147-4.ch025

BACKGROUND

What is E-Government?

E-Government Definitions

E-Government, an abbreviation for electronic government, is also known as connected government, digital government, e-gov, online government, transformational government (Gronlund & Horan, 2005; King & Cotterill, 2007; Marchionini, et al., 2003).

The European Commission (1998) describes e-government as “an ever-increasing and pervasive use of information and communication technologies in the context of the Information Society, which more and more affects the public sector; the importance of this development is increasingly acknowledged in many countries around the world and experiments are being conducted at all levels of government – local, regional, national and European – to improve the functioning of public services concerned and to extend their interaction with the outside world” (as cited in Vassilakis et al., 2007, pp. 1). As defined by Yoneji Masuda (1980), information society is “a new type of society, where the possession of information (and not material wealth) is the driving force behind its transformation and development [...] (and where) human intellectual creativity flourishes” (as cited in Karvalics, 2007). Likewise, Silcock (2001) states e-government as a new mode of public service where all public organizations deliver an up-to-date, incorporated and seamless service for the general public; it uses a combination of technology, business processes, and human resources to enhance the access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens, business partners and employees as well as forming partnerships between government and its citizens.

The growth of information and communication technologies has increasingly impacted and challenged the online delivery of government information and services through the Internet

and other digital media. It provides with “Everything: Anytime, Anywhere, Anyway” (Deloitte Research, 2003, pp. 23). This non-hierarchical, non-linear, and two-way communication structure is seen as a way to improve service delivery and responsiveness to the general public (West, 2004). Such online services include e-administration, e-citizen, e-collaboration, e-commerce, e-democracy, e-governance, e-management, e-service, and e-society to improve and streamline internal processes and management, connections to citizens and business, electronic exchange of goods and services as well as building partnerships and social developments (Dawes, 2002; Esteves and Joseph, 2008; Yildiz, 2007).

Neal & Cable (2005) defines e-government as “streamlining government by providing efficient and effective services and information to citizens and businesses through advanced technology” (pp. 276). Another definition of e-government is shown on The World Bank’s (n.d.) website:

“E-government” refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. These technologies can serve a variety of different ends: better delivery of government services to citizens, improved interactions with business and industry, citizen empowerment through access to information, or more efficient government management. The resulting benefits can be less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and/or cost reductions.

As seen, although there are many definitions of e-government in the literature, most point to the same agreement. E-government can thus be summarized as the government using the combination of information technology, business processes and human resources to offer seamless online service delivery. This is characterized by two-way

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